

Washington's Ignition Interlock Devices Will Have New Feature Soon **Local News**

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(Olympia)—Alcohol ignition interlocks in Washington will soon have a feature designed to prevent others from performing breath tests for the driver. Starting January 1, 2013, a camera will snap a picture every time the machine is used, verifying that the driver is the person who took the test.

Interlocks are required on the vehicles of those who've been accused or convicted of impaired driving. The machine requires a legal breath sample from the driver before allowing a car to start.

"We've had cases where impaired drivers asked passengers, friends or even children to take the test for them," said Lt. Rob Sharpe, commander of the Washington State Patrol's Impaired Driving Section. "We've even heard stories of people trying to use portable air compressors to take the test."

Failures or attempts to tamper with the device get recorded by the machine's software. The company which leases the interlocks downloads the information and in turn contacts the State Patrol. "We do make personal visits to drivers if we have evidence they have tried to fool the machine," Sharpe said. "Having a picture will be the best possible evidence that someone was trying to cheat."

Washington has what's called an Ignition Interlock License, allowing those whose drivers' licenses would normally be suspended to drive legally with an interlock. It was an acknowledgment that those accused or convicted of impaired driving have jobs and family obligations that require a car.

"History taught us that these people were going to drive anyway," said Captain Rob Huss, commander of WSP's Office of Government and Media Relations. "The Ignition Interlock License gives them a way to drive legally, but gives the rest of us some assurance that they're sober and safe."

Drivers can lose their Ignition Interlock License by attempting to fool the machine, and the photographs will provide new accountability for those trusted with the license.